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List of issues and questions in relation to the eighth periodic report of Cyprus

Addendum

Replies of Cyprus*

[Date received: 16 February 2018]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Abbreviations

MJPO	Ministry of Justice and Public Order
NMWR	National Machinery for Women's Rights
MLWSI	Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MOH	Ministry of Health
MARDE	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CAHR	Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights
MOI	Ministry of Interior
CGE	Commissioner for Gender Equality
CCR	Commissioner for Children's Rights
NAPGE	National Action Plan for Gender Equality
ACPVF	Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family
APHVF	Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
NAP	National Action Plan
SWS	Social Welfare Services
CPI	Cyprus Pedagogical Institute
HEC	Health Education Curriculum
CCD	Cyprus Civil Defence

Part I

Introduction

1. The present document provides responses to the issues and questions submitted to the Government of Cyprus with regard to its eighth periodic report (2011–2017) (CEDAW/C/CYP/Q/8) — hereinafter "the responses to the questions".

2. Like the Eighth Periodic Report (2011–2017) (CEDAW/C/CYP/8) hereinafter the "periodic report", the present document was prepared by the Law Commissioner of the Republic who, pursuant to a Decision of the Council of Ministers, is entrusted with ensuring compliance of the reporting obligations of Cyprus under the international human rights instruments. The Ministry of Justice and Public Order (MJPO) the competent Ministry for the purposes of the Convention, through the National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR), was very much involved in the preparation of the present document. The information and data on the basis of which it was compiled was provided by the Ministries having competence for the specific matter [i.e. the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI), the Ministry of Interior (MIO), the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (MARDE), the Statistical Service of Cyprus], as well as the Police, the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (CAHR) (Ombudsman), the University of Cyprus and Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court.

3. The information contained in the present document was discussed with all the above at ad hoc meetings with the Law Commissioner during the drafting stages. The present document will be communicated to all the above upon submission.

Part II

Responses to questions

Women, peace and security

4. The role of women in conflict-resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation, reconciliation, and sustainable peace is key. At the same time, the violence and degradation suffered by women civilians in conflict — particularly the use of rape as a weapon of war — continues to draw less attention as a peril of armed conflict and remains unaddressed for a number of reasons, leaving victims without any hope of justice or remedy. All the above apply to the case of the Republic of Cyprus as well.

5. Women have participated continuously in the Cyprus peace process since its launch in 1968 and are responsible for much of the body of work produced in this context. The women who have been and who are part of this process may not have been as visible or as in high-profile positions as the male participants in the process, but their contribution has been no less vital. The gender perspective has received increasing attention in the peace process and specific provisions, for example regarding quotas for elected women parliamentarians, have been discussed in the latest round of the process.

6. The paradox of having a conflict situation in a high-income country differentiates Cyprus somewhat from other conflicts. Because of the advanced living

standards of Cypriots, the open and democratic society in which they live, the free and vibrant media sector, the unrestricted access to information and social media, and the tendency to heavily discuss in public the conflict situation, all Cypriots are engaged in the peace process somehow. The direct input of Cypriots, as individuals or as interest groups including women's groups, to those participating in the peace process, is also possible and is, in fact, a regular occurrence. It cannot be claimed that the interests and concerns of any stakeholder or citizen cannot be made known and are not taken into account. If one adds to this the small size of the country and the fact that a large percentage of Cypriots are affected by the conflict, are well aware of its tenets and regularly follow the discussions in the peace process, it can be said that the process is all inclusive. Engagement of Cypriots in the process is not done only within each community as a party to the peace process, but many contacts transcend communal groups and bring together many Cypriots who try to support the process of reunification more actively. Indeed, many of the leaders of such initiatives are women, as women often lead the way in conciliatory thinking.

7. But while on the one hand, despite the ongoing conflict, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Cypriots are protected pursuant to a multitude of domestic and international law provisions and obligations which are upheld by a system governed by the rule of law, on the other hand, because of the ongoing occupation, the Cyprus Government is in practice unable to fulfil these obligations in part of its territory and in respect of Cypriots living there. Due to the international character of the Cyprus conflict, the Cyprus Government is unable to redress this situation on its own and hence persons not in the government-controlled area cannot be accorded the necessary protection. Persons trafficked or at risk of trafficking in the occupied areas of Cyprus enter the country through illegal ports of entry and are thus not known to Cypriot authorities, nor can they benefit from anti-trafficking measures adopted by the Republic of Cyprus because these persons are simply not known to the Cyprus Government and the latter has no knowledge of their presence in Cyprus. While initiatives to combat domestic violence and trafficking have been discussed in bi-communal committees which operate to deal with practical problems arising from the occupation, these bodies do not represent authorities with executive power and may not act against such phenomena. They can only facilitate practical cooperation without prejudice to the fact that an illegal entity was established following an act of aggression. Possibly the sole measure of effectively aiding persons who may be vulnerable to exploitation or trafficking is through prevention, most notably via informing such persons of the risks in their countries of origin.

National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

8. The Commissioner for Gender Equality (CGE) has undertaken, in close co-operation with civil society, the drafting/preparation of the first National Action Plan (NAP) on the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), covering the period 2018–2021, which will ensure the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

9. The bi-communal Technical Committee on Gender Equality continues to function, like all other technical committees operating in the framework of the peace process, despite the current impasse in the process. The Committee has participated in meetings of track 1 of the peace process as well, discussing its views and submitting its suggestions to the chief negotiators, including proposals on constitutional and other provisions that could be adopted as part of the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. In this sense, the mandate of this particular Technical Committee goes further than that of any other, as it calls for the Committee's input regarding the

parameters of the Cyprus problem in addition to facilitating the solution of day to day problems arising from the status quo. The overall objective of the Committee is to contribute to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent relevant resolutions. The UNSG has acknowledged "the concrete steps undertaken to foster the participation of women in the negotiations. Notably, in addition to the establishment of the Committee on Gender Equality, both sides have increased the number of women who are directly involved in the talks, either as members of the negotiating teams or as members of the working groups of experts, often in leading positions".

10. It should be reminded that the Republic of Cyprus is a member of the United Nations since 1960 and numerous other Organizations, including the European Union since 2004. Turkey's military invasion in 1974 and the continuing military occupation of 36.2% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, has resulted in the violation of the human rights of thousands of people, both Greek Cypriots (G/C) and Turkish Cypriots (T/C). As a result of the continuing occupation, the Government is not in a position to apply and consequently ensure the implementation of human rights in the whole of its territory. Occupied territories are subject to specific rules of international law which are set out in the Hague Regulations and in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 as supplemented by the Additional Protocols 1 and 2 of 1977. The European Court of Human Rights in numerous decisions, including the Judgment on the 4th Interstate Application of Cyprus v. Turkey (May 10 2001), underlined that Turkey has "effective overall control over northern Cyprus". It also ruled that violations of human rights by Turkey's soldiers, or officials, or by the subordinate local administration are imputable to Turkey. It is reminded that the unilateral declaration of the so-called "TRNC" in 1983, has been considered legally invalid, and null and void by the UN Security Council, through its resolutions 541(1983) and 550 (1984). Thus, references, such as "military, police ... counterparts", etc., should have been avoided, unless if they were specified as Turkey's subordinate local administration (for instance, paragraph 1 etc. CEDAW C/CYP/Q/8).

11. The Technical Committees, operating in the framework of the peace process, are bi-communal forums for exchange of views on different subjects, according with their thematic title. They comprise individuals representing the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Communities. Therefore, they do not have the power or the authorization to take decisions on behalf of the lawful Government of the Republic of Cyprus. Thus, the suggestion in paragraph 1, stating, inter alia, that "... continued cooperation between military, police and civilian counterparts through the bi-communal Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, the Technical Committee for Humanitarian Matters and its Sub-Committee on Domestic Violence ...", cannot be implemented, as it fails to take into account the aforementioned elements.

Constitutional and legislative framework

12. The legislation or other binding framework to promote, enforce and monitor equality and the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of gender, including direct and indirect discrimination in the private and public spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in line with all relevant provisions of and in all areas covered by the Convention are addressed in the Republic of Cyprus as follows: (a) The Paternity Leave Law of 2017 (L. 117(I)/2017), providing for a two week paternity leave, concurring the period of the maternity leave (18 weeks), during which, the father is eligible for a paternity benefit; and (b) The Protection of Maternity (Amendment) Law of 2017 (L.116(I)/2017), providing for maternity leave of 18 weeks for the biological mother and of 14 weeks in cases of surrogate maternity.

13. There is no explicit legislative provision on intersecting forms of discrimination. However, there is no restraint for examining complaints on multiple discrimination. The CAHR, within her competences as the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Body, examines complaints related to discrimination. The Combating of Racial and other forms of Discrimination Law of 2004, (L. 42(I)/2004) provides the legal basis for Commissioner's interventions. Any discrimination on grounds of race, community, language, colour, religion, political and other beliefs and national or ethnic origin is prohibited (section 5). It covers discrimination on employment, vocational guidance and training, social protection (incl. social security), healthcare, education; and the access to and supply of goods and services including housing. However, gender is not included therein. Combating discrimination on the ground of gender is covered by the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law of 2002, (L.205 (I)/2002), which provides a framework for the equal treatment of men and women, covers any discrimination based on sex (including sexual harassment and harassment) and protects mothers due to pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, maternity or sickness due to pregnancy or childbirth positive actions. The Commissioner's competences also arise (among others) from the Equal Treatment of Men and Women (Access to and Supply of Goods and Services) Law of 2008, (L.18 (I)/2008), which includes the gender.

Access to justice and legal complaint mechanisms

14. Regarding issues related to the Convention, Table 1 of the Appendix indicates the complaints received by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Body[1] for the period between March 2011 to August 2016 related to discrimination on the ground of gender. 44% of the complaints received (205 complaints out of 468 on employment issues) claimed discrimination on the ground of gender and concern women. In 78 cases (out of 205), the Commissioner issued a Report (for 34 cases) or after Commissioner's intervention the complainant was satisfied, or a letter with recommendations was sent to the competent authority or a letter with an extensive analysis was prepared for the complainant. For the other complaints, after the completion of the investigation, the complainant was informed in writing for the reasons of the termination of the investigation (withdrawal of complaint, satisfaction without our intervention, unfounded/unsubstantiated complaints, due to lack of competence). In 7 cases (out of 548), the complainant claimed discrimination for the access to goods and services, education and social protection. The investigation was terminated because these complaints were found unsubstantiated or there was lack of competence to be investigated.

National machinery for the advancement of women

15. In March 2014, the Council of Ministers, decided (Decision No. 76.789 of 23/4/2014), that the Council and the National Committee of the NMWR be chaired by the CGE. The General Secretariat would continue to be staffed by members of the Gender Equality Unit of the MJPO. The staff remains the same (3 officers), but external consultants have additionally been commissioned to provide support and assistance for actions and programmes on a needed basis. Despite the fact that the budget of the NMWR had been considerably decreased due to financial constraints and the need to adhere to a rigorous economic adjustment programme, the annual subsidies to NGOs-members of the NMWR have not been decreased. In recent years,

[1] Total number of complaints received by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Body (03/2011–08/2016) is 1016.

the budget of the NMWR has been increasing considerably, namely from 235.000 Euros in 2016 to 270.000 Euros in 2017 and 370.000 Euros in 2018.

16. The functions of the NMWR continue to include the following: Submission of recommendations to the government on policies, programmes and laws promoting women's rights; Monitoring, coordination and evaluation of the implementation of programmes; Awareness raising programmes/campaigns aiming at the increase of women's representation in political and public life, the reconciliation of working and family life and violence against women; Promotion of education and training programmes on gender equality issues, and the Promotion of gender mainstreaming in public policies and action plans.

17. The Equality Unit functions include the following: Contribution of law reform; particularly in the area of family law; Support and subsidization of women's organisations; International and European relations in the field of gender equality (Ratification of Istanbul Convention and implementation of its provisions, etc.); Promotion of gender mainstreaming in public policies and action plans; Provision of secretariat and scientific support to the NMWR.

18. Updated: Action Plan on Gender Equality.

Administrative/Institutional Reform for the Effective Promotion of Equality between Men and Women

19. The following milestones have been accomplished: (a) Preparation of a new Strategic Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2014–2017; (b) Enhancement — Reconstruction of the NMWR /the appointment of CGE; (c) Revised regulations for funding gender equality projects.

Law reform/improvement of legislative framework

20. In line with CEDAW 2013 Concluding Observations, the activities under this priority area aimed at the enhancement of women's awareness on their rights, including migrant women, removing any impediments faced by women in having effective access to justice, including access to judicial remedies, extra-judicial mechanisms and other legal complaints mechanisms. The reform of the Family Law has been among the priorities of the MJPO. To this end, the Minister established two expert groups composed of judges, lawyers, the Commissioner for Children's Rights (CCR) and academics in the field. The two groups submitted their proposals, which were consolidated by the Ministry, taking on board all recommendations of the CCR, thus achieving full harmonization with the UN Convention on Children's Rights. As a result, seven bills have been prepared and laid before Parliament on 2 February 2018.

Balanced participation of women and men in public and political life

21. Please see Answer 15 below.

Combating all forms of violence against women's actions aiming at the combating of all forms of violence against women

22. Please see Answer 8 below.

Economic Empowerment of Women

23. Certain objectives have been set and implemented under this priority area, such as: (a) Applying equal pay/fight wage gap between men and women; (b) Increasing and supporting women's entrepreneurship, (c) Supporting vulnerable groups of women; (d) Reducing unemployment, (e) Reconciliation of work and family; and (f) Preparing and adopting the National Plan on Population and Family Policies (2014–2015).

24. The Equality Unit is now at the initial stage of drafting a National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAPGE) 2018–2021, in close collaboration with all government departments, women's organizations and other NGOs, academic institutions and human rights bodies.

25. The 2018–2021 NAPGE will include the following six thematic areas/objectives that could form the key priorities for action over the next three years:

(a) Combating all forms of violence against women and implementation of the Istanbul Convention;

(b) Promoting balanced participation between women and men in decision-making positions in public, political, social and economic life;

(c) Modernizing/Improving the Legislative Framework;

(d) Professional Empowerment of Women;

(e) Promoting equality between men and women in employment;

(f) Elimination of Gender Stereotypes and Social Prejudices.

National Human Rights Institution

26. No further steps were taken by the CAHR to reapply for A-status accreditation.

Temporary special measures

27. Various measures have been taken to improve the balance of women and men in decision-making positions such as awareness-raising campaigns with the broad participation of women's organisations; meetings and contacts with political parties and media organisations; dissemination of informational material about the professional profiles of female parliamentary candidates prepared by the NMWR, in view of the Parliamentary Elections of 2016 and exchange of good practices through conferences and seminars.

Stereotypes

28. The sixth key priority area of the Strategic Action Plan, incorporated specific measures aiming mainly at: (a) The promotion of equality and the elimination of gender stereotypes through the media; and (b) The integration of Gender equality into the educational system/educational programmes.

29. In the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Equality between Women and Men 2014–2017, the Office of the CGE and the NMWR organised five two-day seminars on the Elimination of Linguistic Sexism in the documents of public service.

30. Furthermore, the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration, the MJPO/Equality Unit, the Office of the CGE, the Office of the CAHR and the Gender Equality

Committee in Employment and Vocational Training have established a Steering Group for the preparation of a Handbook for the integration of gender mainstreaming in public policies and an Action Plan for the training/education of civil officers responsible for the preparation and implementation of the budget and the strategic development plans and of Equality officers.

31. The handbook on the integration of gender mainstreaming in public policies was prepared by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies and was adopted by the Council of Ministers. It will be distributed and used as a tool for awareness /training of public officers.

Gender-based violence against women

32. Important developments have taken place, most notable including the enactment of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification) Law of 2017, [L.14(III)/2017], which paved the way for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (10 November 2017). A bill criminalising harassment and stalking which is now before Parliament is also a milestone.

33. A bill to criminalize violence against women, aiming at fully integrating the provisions of the Istanbul Convention into national law has been prepared and is expected to be soon put in wide public consultation with all stakeholders.

34. Policy changes have been implemented to reflect the NAP for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (2017–2019), approved by the Council of Ministers on 25/5/2017. The new NAP focuses on the following objectives:

(a) Revision/Updating of the Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures prepared by the ACPCVF and approved by the Council of Ministers in 2002;

(b) Promotion of systematic specialized and also interdepartmental training for front-line professionals, dealing with incidents/ cases of domestic violence;

(c) Reinstatement of the specialization of Family Counsellors within the Social Welfare Services(SWS);

(d) Development and adoption of a multi-agency Risk Assessment Mechanism for more effective management of incidents/cases of domestic violence;

(e) Promotion of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the Cyprus Parliament with national legislation; (already ratified);

(f) Promotion of the effective implementation of the new national legislation on the Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law of 2016, [L.51(I)/2016].

35. At present there are no government-run shelters for victims of domestic violence. The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (APHVF), a non-governmental organization, operates two shelters, staffed with fully qualified personnel.

36. The MLWSI invests in the mobilization of NGOs concerning the prevention and handling of violence in the family. In 2016 a total amount of €178,000 and in 2017 a total amount of €137,000, were granted to the APHVF, through the Grants-in-Aid Scheme, for the support of the Shelter, the Crisis Centre and other programs. In accordance with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, recently ratified by the Republic of

Cyprus, the MLWSI, in the framework of the Grants-in-Aid Scheme, will call for proposals from NGOs for the development of two shelters for victims of violence and a Multidisciplinary Information and Support Services Centre for Women Survivors of Violence.

37. Training provided to Police Officers is mandatory in Cyprus. Lectures on domestic violence are offered at the basic training programme and at specialized courses, which focus primarily on addressing specific needs such as: Domestic Violence issues; Handling Child/Juvenile Victims; Interviewing vulnerable/child victims/witnesses and; Investigating sexual abuse crimes.

38. With the enactment of Law 51(I)/ harmonising with EU Directive 2012/29:

(a) Relevant lectures are offered at the basic training programme for Recruit Police Officers;

(b) Introduction by the Police of the "Protocol on Risk Assessment of Violence in Intimate Partners" in January 2018 and specialized training programmes are being designed and organized.

39. A special unit to deal with the investigation of all child sexual abuse and exploitation cases by specially trained Police Officers has been established since 1/1/2017. The Unit is one of the main components of the newly established Children's House (Barnahaus) in which such cases will be dealt with on a multi-disciplinary/one-stop shop approach by all Services concerned (i.e. SWS, Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services).

40. Courses on interviewing children/vulnerable witnesses on the basis of evidence-based protocols are being offered to Police interviewers intermittently and such courses have been attended by interviewers abroad, including the National Children's Advocacy Centre (NCAC), Huntsville-Alabama, USA (21–25/08/2017).

41. In 2017, the following seminars were held at the Cyprus Police Academy concerning child sexual abuse:

(a) Refresher Course on Interviewing Children and Vulnerable Witnesses;

(b) Trainings for all members of the Community/Neighbourhood Policing on Child Sexual Abuse;

(c) Training Program on Investigating Cases of Sexual Abuse (including child abuse).

42. Additional training on the subject is scheduled on the Police training agenda for 2018. The same holds for training on: (a) investigating skills (interviewing suspects, evidence gathering, etc.) on child sexual abuse cases; and (b) on non-suggestive interviewing techniques for child victims of sexual violence. Domestic violence rates have remained stable. Frequent training of the Police personnel continues, aiming at achieving higher levels of sensitivity and professionalism among Police members handling these cases and therefore better investigation.

43. "Circle of Change" is a project that prevents and combats violence against women and girls through gender equality awareness (JUST/2016/RGEN/AG/VAWA/9945) currently being implemented by a partnership of NGOs and the Police. Various related actions are planned, including trainings for professionals across various sectors. Funds of the project have been used for drafting a police training manual on violence against women; with an emphasis on domestic violence, which will be issued in early 2018, among others to be used in Police trainings foreseen by the same

project. Pursuant to the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law of 2000, [L. 119(I)/2000] — section 6, Welfare Officers were appointed as Family Counsellors.

44. Family Counsellors work on cases of complaints concerning possible violence and conduct engaging in investigations, providing advice, guidance and mediation to alleviate family issues that may have led to or may lead to violence.

45. Psychological support to abused women is provided, by clinical psychologists, in outpatient clinics (Mental Health Services). Such cases are regarded as urgent cases and take priority. In addition, psychological support and continuous monitoring is provided to the staff of the shelter. This practice has a positive effect on handling trafficking victims. There is also a rape victims' registry at the Hospital level.

46. The number of child sexual abuse cases reported in 2017 has increased. 138 reports have been documented although the numbers are not comparable (criminal cases vs complaints). This is most likely related to the enhancement of awareness- raising campaigns on the subject and the improvement of the processes of conducting the investigation (including the Police processes), as well as the multi-disciplinary support given to children and families.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

47. Although it is very difficult to evaluate the real impact of the efforts made in a tangible way and it is generally recognised that there are still challenges, significant work and as such progress has been made in establishing solid grounds for the future. Cyprus has succeeded, to raise awareness of the crime of trafficking in human beings (THB) at all levels: social, administrative and operational. In combined efforts of governmental and non-governmental sectors, awareness raising campaigns have included schools, universities and army camps as well as through press conferences and daily news reporting, training programmes and seminars. At an administrative level, it remains a critical priority in policy development. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and the National Action Plan (NAP) are ways in which institutionalised continuance of efforts has been established. Furthermore, these tools have paved a roadmap for each involved authority, including governmental and nongovernmental organisations, in terms of duties and responsibilities and have allowed for a structured and targeted response, better cooperation, accumulation and sharing of experience and knowledge.

48. Since 2013 recommendations of the CAHRP concerning the anti-trafficking framework were taken into account and issues brought up in the previous report have been addressed, both legislatively and administratively. The most important development has been the adoption of a new, more comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation, i.e. the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking and of Human Beings and Protection of Victims Law of 2014, [L.60(I)/2014], transposing, inter alia, Directive 2011/36/EU into national Law and criminalizing such actions. The recommendations were also taken into consideration in the preparation of the NAP and the NRM disseminated to all parties involved in 2016. Judicial review against any administrative decision, including the revocation of a temporary residence permit or registration certificate of a victim of trafficking, is safeguarded by Article 146 of the Constitution. In practice, no permits or registration certificates were revoked because of the discontinuance of criminal proceedings or the non-cooperation of the victim in the legal proceedings against traffickers. Furthermore, the anti-trafficking legislation foresees that the MOI, upon individual assessment of each case, can

consider granting a residence permit or registration certificate for humanitarian reasons, if this is in the interest and protection of the individual concerned.

49. The investigation of criminal cases is carried out on the basis of the new legislation. The specialized unit of the Cyprus Police handles and deals with all complicated and serious trafficking of human beings cases, as the personnel is composed of experienced investigators and trained officers in dealing with victims of trafficking. For relevant statistics, see Appendix, Table 2 and 3.

50. Regarding the 2013 Report, of the CAHR, the following recommendations have been adopted:

(a) Harmonization of national Law with Directive 2011/36/EU;

(b) Staffing of the Anti-trafficking Unit of the Police;

(c) Improvement of the coordination between public departments and NGOs regarding victims' right to access to their, by law, rights (employment, social aid etc.);

(d) More intense and adequate trainings of police staff and 'frontline' officers, regarding the tracing of potential victims of trafficking especially based on the NRM.

51. In order to enforce the provisions of the Private Employment Agency Law of 2012, [L 126(I)/2012], the supervision of private employment agencies was strengthened. During 2017, the Department inspected 116 out of 153 agencies and revoked the license of 10 agencies which violated provisions of the law.

52. According to L.60(I)/2014, all victims of trafficking have the right to support services. The SWS of the Republic provide information to victims concerning their rights and access to services and the necessary support as long as required (e.g. government shelter, networking with other services, etc.). An evaluation assessment is also performed to identify their needs in order to refer them to the appropriate government agencies and NGOs for assistance. The SWS operate a specialized shelter for victims of trafficking with a capacity of 15 places. The shelter is one of the options available to accommodate victims of sexual exploitation. The victim may remain in the shelter for a period not exceeding four (4) weeks. Under certain circumstances, accommodation can be extended. The government has adequately trained staff to provide support to victims of trafficking. Victims are referred by the Social Welfare Officers, to the MOH for mental and psychological assessment and to the MLWSI for employment services.

53. The government provides a rent subsidy and a monthly allowance for female victims of sex trafficking who choose not to stay in the shelter, as well as to female labour trafficking victims and all male victims, in the absence of specialized facilities. Victims are entitled to psycho-social services, health care, translation and interpretation services, education, vocational training and financial assistance.

54. Prostitution as such, is not criminalized in the national legislation. The Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings investigates cases of sexual exploitation. The possibility of forced prostitution or sexual exploitation of women is of major concern to the Office.

55. The Police conducts systematic and thorough checks, inspections and raids in nightclubs, pubs and other establishments for infringement of any law and especially the anti-trafficking law.

56. Moreover, undercover operations are conducted by the police at premises where information lead to reasonable suspicion that forced prostitution, sexual exploitation,

forced labour or other forms of human trafficking take place. By means of these operations, the Police primarily aims to rescue possible victims of trafficking, protect their human rights, prevent actions connected to human trafficking as well as arrest and prosecute people suspected of trafficking in human beings and/or exploitation.

57. The Police co-operates with various governmental and non-governmental organizations. In particular, the Office of Combating Human Trafficking cooperates with social workers of the SWS, state psychologists and with NGO's in order to offer the victims accommodation, psychological support and all the rights provided by the Anti-trafficking Law.

58. In addition, the Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is in close cooperation with the Aliens and Immigration Department, in order to profile the possibility of sexual exploitation of women during random inspections and or upon arrivals at the airports of people coming from high risk to THB countries. Additional measures that are taken by the Police in order to facilitate especially front line officers regarding victim identifications and handling, is (a) the adoption of the "Identification Process Manual" that is based on the International Labor Organization Indicators (ILO) for identifying victims of trafficking, the World Health Organization & International Centre for Migration Policy Development research and on the provisions of the anti-trafficking Law; and (b) the issue of a pocket-size operational guide on THB and victim identification.

Participation in political and public life

59. Equal participation of women and men in decision-making positions in social and political spheres has been instrumental through awareness-raising campaigns with the Government working with a broad-based of women's organizations, meetings and contacts with political parties and media organizations, the dissemination of statistical data and research findings and the exchange of good practices through conferences and seminars. Within the framework of the effort to enhance and strengthen the position of women in public and political life, the committees of the NMWR on employment and economic empowerment of women and on women's participation in decision-making are planning various actions in order to achieve equity for both women and men in political and public decision-making. An awareness raising campaign on women workers' rights and workshops on the need for and the implementation of equal participation of men and women in decision-making has been conducted island wide. The percentage of women high-level representatives of the Republic of Cyprus, at the international level is currently 12%. There are Six Women Ambassadors or High-Level Diplomats serving, either as Head of Missions or Representatives, on Embassies or Permanent Missions of the Republic of Cyprus abroad. During the last years, the number of women judges has been steadily increasing, reaching 50% in 2017. The total number of women judges is 59 out of 119. Please see Appendix, Table 4.

Nationality

60. The issue of the ratification of the 1954 Convention is pending upon Parliament. Further steps are taken for the ratification of the 1961 Convention of the Reduction of the Statelessness.

Education

61. The Department of Labour Relations of the MLWSI, coordinated an EU-funded project titled "Combating Gendered Occupational Segregation" which included the

provision of training for Teacher Career Counselors as well as the production of a Teacher's Manual. An overarching goal of this project was to encourage girls to enter non-traditional fields as a way of combating the gender pay gap.

62. The MOEC [Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI), Curriculum Development Unit] published in 2017 a Teacher's Manual for "Identifying and Managing incidents of Children's Sexual Abuse" which was sent to all public school teachers (Primary and Secondary Education). The MOEC has also developed a draft for the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Violence in Schools which includes a gender perspective on how violence affects girls and women.

63. Further measures will be included in the new Action Plan on Gender Equality, to include addressing discrimination based on gender stereotyping, attitudes and overall behavioural change in the society.

64. The National Strategy for preventing child's sexual abuse (CSA), is comprehensive and covers prevention and protection of children from abuse and from abusing other children The MOEC has made considerable steps to achieve effective sexuality education at all levels of education according to WHO guidelines as part of the reformed Health Education Curriculum (HEC), which in fact is a requirement of Law 91(I)/2014.

65. Violence against women and violence that targets ethnic minority groups have both been included in the HEC and learning objectives including clearly defined gender sensitive indicators related to issues concerning the various forms of racism, including sexism and violence against women. The success indicators of HEC include indicators associated with intimidating behaviour (such as ..."perceive intimidating behaviour, to recognize and resist this", "to propose solutions for addressing the phenomenon of bullying in the school") violence (such as "distinguish the negative consequence arising from any form of exclusion or discrimination", "to distinguish forms of violence, physical, sexual, psychological, socioeconomic") social identities/gender development (such as "recognizing factors that affect the development of social gender"). Additionally, the curriculum includes success indicators relating to respect for diversity.

66. Subsequently the MOEC organized and carried out multi-level trainings. The Committee and CPI have organized training for special needs teachers in order to help them in their work of strengthening their students with special needs and disabilities to protect themselves from sexual violence and sexual abuse. "Keep me Safe" will be used and cooperation with the NGO Cyprus Family Planning Association.

67. The establishment of the Interdepartmental Committee for the Integration of Children with Migrant Background with the participation of representatives of the Directorates of the MOEC mandated to study the existing situation and submit a policy paper and an action plan, covered the macro-level of society and the educational system (formulation of educational policy — policy paper), the average level of the school unit, as an interface between the individual and society, the micro-level of the school class and the teacher-student-parents connection.

68. Under this framework the Department of Secondary Education has implemented special programmes of study for unaccompanied refugee children as well as extra-curricular activities (afternoon language classes, sport activities etc.). Unaccompanied minors/applicants of international protection in particular live in guesthouses under the legal protection and guardianship of the Social Welfare Services. During the school year 2017–2018, approximately 80 children will be attending lessons in five schools (three lyceums and two technical schools) in Nicosia,

Limassol and Larnaca. There is close cooperation with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the SWS, the Asylum Service and the Reception and Accommodation Centre for Applicants of International Protection for issues related to refugee children enrolled in schools.

69. The CPI coordinates two programmes co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Republic of Cyprus.

70. The Republic of Cyprus has participated, as a full partner country, in the two cycles of the "EU/CoE Pilot Projects Scheme on Human Rights and Democracy in Action: Teaching controversial issues — Developing effective training for teachers and school leaders".

71. The CPI also participated in the European project BODI. BODI aimed to contribute to the development of education policies and practices on intercultural education, gender education and inclusion of children/parents of minority cultural backgrounds.

72. The MOEC and the CPI continue the successful coordination of the Erasmus+ project "iDecide" (2016–2018), which has developed an innovative toolkit and induction course to support evidence-based policy making, which can lead to the reduction of disparities in learning outcomes and marginalization.

73. Since 2014, the MOEC has developed an anti-racist policy through the "Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents".

74. The Department of Secondary Education and CPI of the MOEC has also collaborated with the CPCR and the UNHCR Cyprus Office in a programme titled "Away from home and fear", targeting children with refugee and/or migrant background in secondary education.

75. The MOEC is focused on ensuring equal opportunities in education for both genders on a non-discriminatory basis at all levels of education and is promoting several measures to cater for the particular needs of Turkish-Cypriot pupils enrolled in public schools. Empirical and theoretical research related to intercultural education and specific educational initiatives have guided the Ministry to develop and implement programmes for the education of Turkish-Cypriot and other non-native language speaking pupils in public schools, such as provision of bilingual teachers who facilitate the communication between teachers, pupils and parents in public schools and offer Turkish language and culture classes, provision of special support and attention from the Educational Psychology Service and the SWS, organising a number of intercultural activities and events as well as seminars for parents and legal guardians.

Employment

76. Cyprus has implemented a variety of practical measures towards the improvement of the gender pay gap. During the period 2010–2015, a Project with a €2 million budget was implemented, under the title "Actions for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap". The Project consisted of a broad mix of measures, aiming at eliminating the causes of the gap, and involved interventions in every relevant field, education and occupational counselling, labour law enforcement mechanisms, incentives for companies, exchange of best practise between Member States, training and guidance of social partners and raising public awareness. Despite having gone through a severe economic crisis, the gender pay gap in Cyprus was reduced and now stands lower than the EU average, according to the latest data by Eurostat, which means that the

measures taken, have already proved to be effective in dealing with the gender pay gap.

77. During 2013, officers and inspectors of the MLWSI, along with officers from the Ombudsman's office, followed a detailed training programme of theoretical and practical content, aimed at enhancing their knowledge and skills when handling complaints or conducting inspections involving inequalities in employment and pay. Their training included job evaluation methods.

78. A national model for certifying enterprises which adopt policies promoting gender equality in the workplace has been developed, and a National Certification Body was established in April 2014, responsible for granting these certifications, by decision of the Council of Ministers. 47 companies have been awarded a certification so to date. The certification procedure has encouraged companies to review and assess their own policies in order to enhance the promotion of gender equality in their workplace. At the same time, the interest demonstrated by new companies each year to apply for certification, shows that increasing numbers of employers recognise the added value of integrating and effectively mainstreaming gender equality in their policies, has an overall positive impact.

79. During the period 2013–2015, specialised training programmes took place for almost all primary and secondary teachers, all educational counsellors providing occupational guidance in schools, and almost 3.500 parents of school-kids, with the aim of eliminating stereotypes in education and family life, which result in stereotypes as regards the choice of occupation and eventually leading to occupational segregation (both horizontal and vertical).

80. In 2013, the text of all signed collective agreements was reviewed, including the original text and their renewals, with the aim of examining their provisions and identifying any direct or indirect discrimination with regards to the gender pay gap.

81. Trade union members, employers' associations' representatives, lawyers, accountants, human resource professionals and members of professional associations, participated in 2014 in training seminars, aiming at improving the level of compliance of companies with the Equal Pay Legislation. A guide was also issued and disseminated, involving practical ways of promoting pay equality, while engaging in collective bargaining.

82. These measures are complementary in reducing the gender pay gap and pension gap. The successful implementation of the above measures has contributed, amongst others, to the significant decrease of the gender pay gap. The gap has decreased significantly since 2007 (22%) and keeps following a downward trend reaching a percentage as low as 14% in 2015. With a percentage higher than the EU average in 2010, the Republic of Cyprus currently ranks 7th among the countries with the lowest rate, and has achieved a rate significantly below the EU average (16.4%). It should also be noted that the Republic of Cyprus ranks 5th among States having accomplished the highest percentage decrease in the gender pay gap during the period 2010–2015, despite the economic crisis and having to implement a strict economic adjustment programme during 2013–2016. Since several of the measures are ongoing or expected to have long-term benefits, and due to the gradual but continuous advancement of women's position in the labour market, the downward trend of the gender pay gap in the Republic of Cyprus is expected to continue.

83. The Trade Union Laws of 1965 to 1996 safeguards the freedom of association of any employee and prohibits the discrimination of any employee regarding participation to a trade union. As mentioned in the "periodic report", the Protection

of Maternity Legislation has been amended in 2011 and 2015 with Laws 70(I)/2011 and 175(I)/2015 respectively. Following these amendments, the following improvements to the level of protection were afforded to pregnant women:

(a) Dismissal of a pregnant worker is prohibited provided the worker has informed her employer of her pregnancy in writing. The term "in writing" is not limited to a doctor's pregnancy notification, but can include a written letter, email, fax, sick leave or similar notification as well as a medical certificate, stating the fact of the pregnancy;

(b) Furthermore, if the employer is informed of the workers pregnancy orally, either by the pregnant worker or through her colleagues or in any other way, or even if he/she did not know of the pregnancy and he/she proceeds with a dismissal, the pregnant worker is entitled, within 5 working days of receiving the dismissal or notice for dismissal, to notify her pregnancy to the employer by means of a valid medical certificate. Once she does this, then the employer must repeal the dismissal or notice for dismissal so as to ensure that she will be afforded the protection from dismissal under the law, as specified above;

(c) Dismissal or notice of dismissal to a working woman who intends to adopt a child is prohibited, provided that the said worker has notified her employer by a certification of the Department of SWS that she intends to adopt a child;

(d) In cases of multiple births (twins, triplets and so on), the mother is entitled to an additional four weeks of maternity leave for each child;

(e) In cases of premature labour or any other case where the infant is hospitalised right after birth for health reasons, the mother is entitled to additional maternity leave.

84. The ILO Convention No. 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers, addresses areas of Cyprus law where the degree of regulation has already reached an advanced stage. Most of the provisions are covered to a large extent by the European Union acquis in the areas of social policy, anti-discrimination (employment equality, gender equality, maternity protection), judicial cooperation in criminal matters and asylum and immigration. Therefore, they are already in effect at national level. The Government of Cyprus believes that the provisions of the Convention are largely met by law and practice followed nationally in this field. As there are certain provisions of the Convention that are extremely detailed, its ratification is not feasible at present.

85. Administrative adjustments are constantly being made to improve domestic work.

Health

86. The MOH offers accessibility to Women in all Health and Public Health Services. It has developed a new strategic plan for 2016–2018. It will also continue to develop and implement National Programs that target specific, vulnerable and age groups, emphasizing the following: (a) Promoting programs to protect and promote the health of children (reactivation and operation of the Consultative Committee for the "Prevention of childhood accidents and poisoning" with the mandate to prepare a new action plan. A strategic plan for combating violence for children and a strategy for the promotion of rights of children in relation to health will be also developed. Additionally, the strategy for the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding will be implemented); and (b) Completion of the review of the capacities of

Immigrant Health in Cyprus and preparation of the relevant strategy, according to the needs.

87. The NAP on Minimizing the Consequences of the Economic Crisis in Public Healthcare which covers the period September 2013–September 2015, has been specifically designed for vulnerable groups in order to provide the intensification of the existing public health programmes, has been successfully implement as a bridge to the National Health Insurance System which will be implemented with a specific roadmap (Implementation of Primary Health Care January 1 2019, full implementation by 2020).

88. The MOH, despite immense pressure of budget cuts, continues to aim to ensure the maintenance as well as access to healthcare treatment for all individuals residing in the Republic of Cyprus. Asylum seekers are granted with full medical coverage, while all vulnerable groups and illegal immigrants are treated within international humanitarian criteria.

89. Women aged over 63 years and limited ability to travel and/or have mobility problems, receive nursing care at home. The community nursing homes offer free medical care, when needed.

90. Psychological support to abused women is provided by clinical psychologists, in outpatient clinics (Mental Health Services). Women in such cases are regarded as urgent and always have a priority. In addition, psychological support and continuous monitoring is provided to the staff of the shelter. This practice has a positive effect on handling trafficking victims. There is also a rape victim registry at the Hospital level.

91. In 2016 the MOH has introduced the HPV Vaccination for girls, of a certain age group, through School Health Services for free. With the Introduction of the HPV vaccination, girls will be protected from the HPV virus. The simultaneous intensification of lectures on topics related to reproductive issues-contraception, and information on HIV/AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases will build a robust background.

92. In June 2017 a new Strategic Plan on Sexual and Reproductive Health was been developed with special actions focusing on girls needs in this regard.

93. Regarding the adoption of the legislation on mandatory reporting of abortions, a new Abortion bill is at the stage of public consultation. At the Public sector, all performed abortions are reported and it is expected that upon the implementation of a unified Health System, the private sector will be included in the reporting system as well. No maternal death, due to abortion, was reported in the last 3 years in the Republic of Cyprus.

94. Regarding contraception, a new programme intending to offer oral contraception for free that covers all low-income women between 18–55 years, is under consideration. Unfortunately, the MOH cannot regulate the import of all modern methods of contraception in the Republic of Cyprus, since pharmaceutical firms follow the rules of free market agreement.

Refugee and asylum-seeking women

95. When an asylum seeker submits an application for international protection, the Aliens and Immigration Unit identifies that individual based on special needs and the Asylum Service proceeds accordingly in order to apply for a gender-sensitive determination of asylum applications. Furthermore, trained female officers,

specialized in gender and cultural sensitivities, are assigned to such cases with the cooperation of female translators. In addition, the Asylum Service has circulated written information to all authorities involved in the asylum process, with a view to identify vulnerable persons as early as possible in the procedure. All Services involved have an obligation to inform the Asylum Service in case they identify an applicant with special needs, providing medical care and psychological support, where appropriate. Trainings and guidelines are systematically provided to the Officers of the Asylum Service, especially the case workers, vis-à-vis the applications based on gender-related persecution. At the core of this effort, usually develops with the EASO (European Asylum Support Office), UNHCR and other agents, concerning gender-related persecution. Asylum seekers' access to the labour market is permitted, after a certain period from the date of the submission of their application. There is no distinction made between men and women.

96. All asylum seekers are entitled to work after six months from the date they applied for asylum, in the following sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, waste management (drainage and waste water treatment, collection and treatment of waste and refuse, in trade (workers of gasoline-washing machines and wholesalers) and other activities (building and outdoor cleaning workers, distributors of promotional/informative material and ready-made food etc.).

97. Sex-disaggregated data regarding detainees are not kept.

98. The Mennoyeia Detention Centre ensures that health professionals, including those for women, are available on a daily basis. All detainees are immediately taken to the emergency room upon their request. A psychologist is available 4 times a week.

99. In relation to the reference in the list of issues that "detention of women victims of torture, trafficked women and pregnant women is not prohibited in the State party" it is stressed that this is totally unsubstantiated. Torture is prohibited by Constitution and the International Treaties ratified by Cyprus and cannot be tolerated. Law 60(I)/2014 protects potential recognised victims of trafficking and therefore can never be placed in detention.

100. Furthermore, pregnant women are not held in detention. In cases of a woman is arrested for the purpose of deportation where pregnancy is not clearly visible, if during medical examination (which includes a full blood test), it appears that she is pregnant, she is immediately released. This policy has been implemented since 2014.

Sustainable development and climate change

101. In the top hierarchy of the Cyprus Civil Defence (CCD), women employees constitute 43%. These officers are engaged in policy making and implementation, science procedures and training. In the volunteering group of CCD, approximately 50% are women. They are responsible for training and intervention in cases of disasters. They belong to the following departments: Search and Rescue, First Aid, Neighbourhood Watch, Care and Communications. In the risk communication strategy (work in progress) special provisions are made for vulnerable groups: children, women, elderly, disabled. Similar provisions will be introduced for the Risk Reduction Strategy that is under development. The CCD was engaged in the Risk Assessment from Climate Change project and has reported elements of it to the European Commission. National Risk Assessment will be refreshed during 2018. The CCD has started collecting statistical data for disasters, from different government organizations, for the period 2005–2017. Utmost efforts will be made to segregate the data concerning women and other vulnerable groups.

102. In the Department of Environment, most employees involved in policy making and the preparation of actions and programs for climate change mitigation are women. In designing of these policies, the particular needs of women and girls are taken into consideration. During public consultations, an emphasis is placed on listening to the voices of local communities, including women, and shaping policies accordingly.

Marriage and family relations

103. Research on the economic consequences of divorce on both spouses — gender-based economic disparities of divorced spouses has been conducted through a study entitled 'Research on the economic consequences of divorce on both spouses — gender-based economic disparities of divorced spouses'. The study was carried out by "YPATIA" Foundation Promoting Equality in 2016, with the financial support of the NMWR. This study examined the economic consequences of divorce for both men and women, taking into consideration gender-based economic disparities, especially during the economic crisis. The study also examined issues faced by divorced spouses in relation to possible legal voids/weak points/lack of provisions of related family law. The research covered a representative and weighted random sample of 220 divorced spouses throughout Cyprus, so that the research could produce credible results and included personal interviews of 12 divorced spouses. For more details, please see Appendix, Table 5.

Data collection

104. Please see Appendix, Table 6.